

## Dungeon S 941

### Chapter 941 Leaving for Australia

Not even half an hour later, Xia Mao was greeted by a strange sight. He was baffled by the sheer number of bags his comrades were carrying around. Apart from haversacks to hold the extra armour for Tanke, they were also dragging along plastic bags full of emergency food supplies allowing their Panda Mercenary to recover on the go without the need for any healing spells.

"You know you guys could have just stored everything inside your storage rings, right?" Xia Mao questioned them, wondering if they were doing this on purpose to show off how massive their shopping spree had been.

Before he got an answer, a Panda Sailor was announcing that the boarding of the ship would now begin. Xia Mao was in no rush since there were many other Pandarens next to them and he knew they would all gain a notification shortly before it would leave.

"Bu Dong said it would be best if we have the items out. This way it will be easy for us to sort them out on the ship and give it to our Panda Mercenary." Zi Dan answered and quickly followed Xia Mao, who was holding the tickets.

Once they entered their previously allocated cabin, Jing Yu noticed a change in the cabin's layout. Just as they had suspected, a new room had been made available for Bu Dong, and all his items had been transferred to it. They were surprised by the staggering number of items in his personal hideout, and he blushed.

"Well... it's a bit embarrassing. My parents know that I've been dungeoneering a lot and they are happy about the increase in my grade. In fact, they were so happy that I found a hobby that might potentially be useful for my future, that they even gave me some extra money to invest into Boss Jin's shop. However, I might have used part of that money to purchase some things they might not approve of, if I brought them back..." Bu Dong was fidgeting with his hands as he explained his situation with some awkwardness. The Elder Pandarens concurred with his logic.

Apart from useful things like weapons, armors and inscriptions, the room was filled with plushies, figurines and other miscellaneous goodies that Jin was selling to promote his dungeons. If anything, Bu Dong's collection of items might actually be the only one on the level of Xiong Da's. And yet, the lawyer often 'complained' that so far he had only managed to collect a bulk of the items that Jin had released to the public.

Each went to their respective personal rooms for a moment to check on certain supplies for the next round. Bu Dong was the first to be done with the task, and soon Zi Dan joined him in the living room. There Xia Mao encountered them sorting through their purchases.

"Zi Dan, I have something to ask you. Could it be that you plan to leave for Australia soon and have avoided telling us so far?" Xia Mao, who had always been a brutally honest companion, shocked his friend with his deduction.

The old man did not hesitate to be upfront in order to clear any misunderstanding. While it was confirmed that Zi Dan had sometimes talked about his wish to move closer to his son, there were many

other problems old age could bring and if the reason for his strange behaviour was some type of illness, it might be best not to continue with the dungeon.

"I... Ah.. so you managed to guess why I had been so jittering for the past few hours." Zi Dan lowered his head and sighed, thinking of a way to say it without hurting his friends' feelings.

Bu Dong quickly excused himself and returned to his room since he just remembered something 'very important' that he had to check up on right now. Both of them realised that for a young guy, Bu Dong sure knew how to keep his manners, wishing that their own grandkids could also grow up to act in the same way. Meanwhile, Jing Yu, who had overheard the conversation, stood at her room's door waiting for the men talk it out between themselves first.

"I didn't want to lie to the two of you. I just didn't know how to tell you. I figured we should at least make the best out of the remaining time we have left together. I might be able to return to Shenzhen once in a while, like during the holidays, but I doubt we will be seeing each other that much in the future. That is why I wanted to clear this dungeon and maybe even achieve a first clear so you won't forget me that easily. It's because I've really come to like you guys even though we only met recently. The fun we had in these dungeons was extraordinary."

"So to get a Pandawan on our side to ease our dungeon clearing ability, I was ready to lower my head or even beg for Bu Dong to come to join us. I just wanted to have the best experience with you guys before leaving after the Chinese New Year holidays." Zi Dan explained himself, and towards the end, his eyes began to swell up.

"Geez, it's not like you leaving is the end of the world or anything. It's totally different from when we were young. The world is very connected nowadays, and all we need to do is simply click a button, and we can see each other again." Xia Mao shook his head while pointing to his phone.

At the same time, he was relieved that the reason behind Zi Dan's excessive initiative was indeed merely because he was leaving and not because he had gotten ill or caught a disease like cancer. "We are all adults, so we know that we each have our own individual lives, and the only time we get together is during these morning dungeon exercises. But thank you for thinking of us as part of your life."

"Yes, we appreciate the thoughts." Jing Yu added as she opened her arms up, beckoning Zi Dan to come over for a friendly hug.

"Well, I guess I have to work a little harder than usual. Gotta earn the privilege of returning to my heavenly bed." Xia Mao joked as he walked towards Bu Dong's room and knocked.

"Is everything okay?" Bu Dong questioned as he felt like he had come in at the wrong time to join the group.

"Yeah, everything should be fine now. Sorry about that. When you are our age, it's best to clear things up as soon as possible. Otherwise, you might not have the chance to do so." Xia Mao apologised as he called the boy out of his room.

"C'mon, we are not that old according to society's standards." Jing Yu insisted with a slur.

"Please, to Bu Dong and the others, we are like basically old pigs and cows" Xia Mao replied as they all cleared their differences and started to plan for the dungeon clear. Bu Dong had not listened in on their conversation, so he was unaware of what exactly had occurred.

However, from what he could see the issue seemed resolved and Xia Mao appeared to be much more eager to actively participate. Taking their newfound motivation into account, the young Pandawan decided to propose a change of plans to further increase their chances of obtaining the shop's first dungeon clear in this limited Nian Event.

### **Chapter 942 Second Round!**

The bells rang as a last call for the cultivators to set out on their boats. Bu Dong was in the midst of a heated discussion with Zi Dan and Xia Mao about what they had to do next when they came down the stairs from their cabin. Behind them was Jing Yu who was holding their Panda Mercenary... Heala.

After Bu Dong had heard about their experiences within the dungeon instance and how successful they had been by utilising the holy trinity (although they did not name it as such), he felt dumb that he did not realise it sooner especially since the recommendation emphasised the need for a tank and a healer to clear this dungeon instance.

During the time they had to prepare for the second run, the Angry Ape Cultivator had discovered that the holy trinity might not have been fully integrated into the whole system yet. The whole RPG mechanic still seemed "lite" enough to allow an offensive composition to stand a chance against Nian and her underlings as long as they dodged enough.

For example, the HP bar they had in their visor was an indicator of their health, but many Pandarens knew that it was not perfect but more of an estimate. Even if they received substantial damage from the monsters and were down to zero hit points, they could actually still fight on by pushing their limit. It was not a computational sequence of numbers but a battle of will against the monsters. (Of course only to a certain extent. Near-death, limbless humans can't do much after all but who knows? )

Bu Dong was confident that with Zi Dan's hidden healing skills and Heala's recovery magic, they might be able to pull through. Thus the group had decided to follow Bu Dong's advice and gamble their potential first clear on his new strategy.

However, Xia Mao was still sceptical since they had yet to see Nian release any significant death-defying moves considering her health was barely a quarter down.

"Do you think we can ram the boat into her again like you did on your first run?" Bu Dong questioned, hoping to do some extra damage against Nian before the showdown. Every little bit might make the difference between a first clear and another defeat.

"I doubt that. Besides, if we ever encounter her in a similar situation, I'd probably just jump overboard. Once was more than enough and if possible, I want to avoid a repeat for sanity's sake." Xia Mao grumbled as he turned on the engine.

"The Nian shouldn't be in these parts anymore. The Village Chief gave us the information that she should be residing within the Volcanic Caverns now." Jing Yu added.

"Let's just hope the fire resistance charms will be enough for us to deal with her. Without Tanke around, we are going to need every little bit of protection we can get." Zi Dan slightly regretted the change since he had paid for two sets of extra armour. Thankfully those sets of armour could be refitted to fit anyone with the aid of Jin's cosmetic inscription.

Something too bulky? Just use cosmetic inscription to tighten it!

It was a revolutionary idea from Bu Dong who had done something similar in the past. The only downside was that the cosmetic inscription did not last forever. The moment the armour left Jin's store, it would turn back to its normal bulky form.

With everyone being well equipped after their shopping spree, Xia Mao cautiously navigated the motorboat towards the village harbour. The inhabitants cheerfully welcomed them back again. (Meanwhile in a separate dungeon instance, those returning offenders had been treated with disgust and spite. Some of the villagers even threw rocks at their boat.)

Chief Erming of the Song Chew Village queried whether they were well enough, revealing his knowledge about the fact that the cultivators were able to 'revive'.

"There is one last favour I'd personally like to ask of you before you embark towards finding the Nian." Erming requested and Xia Mao turned his head towards Bu Dong.

The Pandawan's stare was all the Blind Cat Cultivator needed to confirm the young boy's intention. "Apologies, Chief. We will try to accommodate your request, but we cannot make any promises. Perhaps after we have defeated the beast."

"Ah, that is a valid response. I'd like you to get some flowers for my daughter." Chief Erming was understanding and did not force them. He still gave them the side quest, allowing their Pandamonium App to update their logs.

"The Rainbow Flower is native to our island. The flower exists in seven different varieties, each one a colour of the rainbow hence their name. They were a favourite of my late wife, and my daughter has inherited her love for these flowers. If you manage to gather all seven of them, I will give you a bonus."

Bu Dong had already checked in the ever-busy forums with regards to the last quest left for the Elder Pandarens. It was a simple fetch quest that allowed the Chief to reward some Panda Medals to the group. The flowers themselves were not too difficult to find, but they were all over the place, meaning that one would have to backtrack unless they got the side quest early on.

Chief Erming went into his hut and came out with a unique piece of firecracker that looked completely different from the others they had given out before. "Everyone in our village has contributed something to help craft this particular firecracker. We've harvested the materials from the Nian underlings you've slain and hoped that this item will help you in the fight against their mother."

The firecracker was gleaming even when it was not yet lighted. The really special thing about this particular firecracker was that it was shaped like a halberd. There was a hardened wooden shaft that held onto the firecracker, and they had even added an axe blade.

Upon closer inspection, the cultivators saw small engravings of each and every villager the Elder Pandarens had helped during the side quests. Village Chief Erming brought out a metal pen. "Please inscribe your names on the firecracker as well. This would have been impossible without your effort. Ah, Mr Bu Dong, please do not hesitate to write your name on it as well. Although this might be the first time we meet, your eyes and expression show me your resolution of wanting to bring the Nian down. That is all we need of you."

"When it is my turn, I will be honoured to add my name to it with pride. For now, this source of achievement should be given solely to the Pandarens who aided you here." Bu Dong understood that based on the Elder Pandaren party's 'save' state, he seemed to be treated as a 'visitor' who was either benefitting from the trio's good reputation or from his own actions in the previous save.

"Uncle Xia Mao please let me take a photo of it! I suspect we might be among the first few parties who have managed to get this unique firecracker weapon!"

"So... Anyone capable of carrying a spear?" Bu Dong asked after taking a few pictures of the weapon which he decided to upload on behalf of their group into the spoiler section of the Nian Event subforum.

"Not too sure about Zi Dan and Xia Mao, but I have handled spears before as part of the training for my cloth blades." Jing Yu volunteered, and the two old men already placed their palms out to point at the Hungry Condor Cultivator, indicating she should have the honour.

"Remember, this is a one-time weapon. Once you light the fuse, you only have that amount of time to use it!" Erming warned them as he pointed into the direction of the Volcanic Caverns. "Also, please grant my brother the honour to escort your group inside the caverns. It's his sincere wish to face Nian on an equal footing and going along with your group will give him the greatest chance to survive such an encounter."

"Please allow me to join you in battle!" Yiming, the Village Head Hunter kowtowed before them, and the Elder Pandarens who previously accompanied him to battle, knew that he could hold himself in a fight and understood when to retreat as well. Bu Dong had not reached that particular side quest yet and just trusted the Pandarens in their judgement.

### **Chapter 943 Bu Dong Haggles**

"This is as far as the horses will bring you." Chief Erming said as he stopped the carriage wagon. With his brother joining their team, he had decided to transport them as close as possible to Nian's current location. "Apologies for the bumpy ride."

"No worries, you have our thanks for graciously bringing us all the way to the cavern's opening. Coming so close to the beast's hideout is very brave of you." Jing Yu thanked Chief Erming and voluntarily took out a few panda medals to reward the Chief for his time and effort.

"This is the first time someone gave me something back." Erming looked very surprised but humbly accepted them. "Hmmm, now that I'm here, I've recalled something about this place. The legends speak that this cavern is not exactly Nian's home. Rather, it is the hunting ground of the abomination."

"Many of the brave villagers who tried to fight against Nian have died here." Head Hunter Yiming added on, and suddenly Bu Dong could not help but smile widely. This meant that Nian was not going to run, and this would be the battleground for the final battle.

"I ... sincerely thank you for that information." Bu Dong said as he took out more than just a few panda medals. "If possible, I would like to buy this wagon of yours."

"But then how will our chieftain return? Unlike me, he is no fighter. Without a horse, he won't be able to outrun Nian's underlings if they catch him on the way back." Yiming argued, worried about his younger brother.

"I just need the wagon. You can keep the horses. Maybe leave one here for Yiming later." Bu Dong replied which caused the Village Chief to ponder for a moment.

"Alright, but it will require more than just these few medals to buy the wagon." Erming agreed, and they immediately went into haggling mode. While Xia Mao would have been willing to pay the whole price if it meant increasing their chances (and their time), Bu Dong, who was known to be a rich kid and big spender, insisted on paying a low price. Zi Dan and Jing Yu shook their heads as they found this scene all too familiar.

When they had gone to buy the items from the shophouses, all the shopkeepers familiar with Bu Dong had already pre-empted the haggling and the numbers that came out from their mouths were like bullets from a machine gun.

"100 Medals is the lowest I can go." Chief Erming started his bid, and even though the System was the one ultimately controlling the AIs and knew Bu Dong's behaviour, it was not about to relent to him that easily.

"30 Medals." Bu Dong did not bother to compromise even by a little.

"Outrageous! 80 Medals, and that is ignoring the bunch of items we've already given you so far."

"What?! Aren't those rewards? Basically the payment for the quests we do for you? Also, when you gave us the ride here, I felt that the wagon isn't in the best of conditions. 35 Medals." Bu Dong complaint.

"75 Medals then. Take it or leave it."

"Then we shall not subdue Nian for you. Let's go guys. Let's just pick his precious flowers and be gone from the island." Bu Dong said as he took his sword and returned them into his storage ring, subsequently walking away.

"Wait, wait! 65 Medals. Final price. That's the lowest I can go since I need at least that much money to pay for the materials to rebuild the wagon!" Chief Erming tried to accommodate him, yet Bu Dong moved off and started looking around for any signs of one of the Rainbow Flowers while the rest of the group was left speechless.

With Bu Dong giving him the silent treatment and using the walking away tactic, Erming was hesitant whether he should drop the price any lower or not. His indecision, however, was quickly cured when a roar could be heard from the direction of the Volcanic Caverns.

"Fine, you win! 50 Medals!" Erming had his head down and raised his palm wide open while shouting for Bu Dong to come back.

"50 Medals and one set of extra firecrackers that you have on you." Bu Dong smirked as he pointed at the pouch bag that Chief Erming was holding on to.

"I cannot believe you would even ... Haven't we sold you a bunch of firecrackers when you came? In fact, I'm certain that you bought all of them! Leaving us barely any to fend off any Nian underlings who might come to attack us." Chief Erming very reluctantly agreed to it.

"Well, the fact is that you still have some with you indicating that your village must have some stock remaining." Bu Dong criticised, and Chief Erming was speechless for the moment. And when Bu Dong was being handed to the extra set of firecrackers, he managed to peek into the Chief's pouch, eyeing for more. However, Jing Yu stopped him by putting her hand on his shoulders.

"Don't. Leave those for him to scare away the Nian underlings when travelling back to the village."

"But isn't it just a game? Just a dungeon instance?" Bu Dong's expression clearly reflected this thought.

"This is Boss Jin's Dungeon instance. He has made this as real as it could be while maintaining some elements of magical realism. We've already seen there are consequences being built into this dungeon 'game' engine that he uses. It's best not to let him go empty-handed. It's quite likely that we will have to pay a big price if anything happens to Chief Erming. Worst-case scenario we might fail or be unable to complete the mission on this run." Xia Mao helped Jing Yu in stopping Bu Dong to be too greedy.

"Fine..." Bu Dong sighed as he paid 55 Medals instead of the agreed 50 Medals. Chief Erming thanked him for the extra 'tip' despite the excessive haggling with a forced smile. He quickly released the horses from the wagon to leave before Bu Dong could change his mind.

"Now mind telling us why exactly you purchased this bulky thing? You can't possibly want to use this in our fight?!" Xia Mao asked since the wagon had never been part of any of their plans. Unlike him, both Jing Yu and Zi Dan who realised what Bu Dong might have planned.

"Why not? It was crazy haggling for that item. If it potentially saves our strength while we move forward, I'd say it's already worth it! Also just think about how cool we must look when we watch our run later on." Bu Dong chuckled.

"I like that thought of yours! If the subsequent dungeons get harder because of our little trick here, blame him, okay Jing Yu?" Zi Dan commented as he knew he would not be around to see the aftermath himself.

"It's too expensive for others to casually recreate it." Jing Yu also felt that the stunt Bu Dong was going to show was not for the average cultivators, but it certainly would be flashy.

"That is why I've always been Boss Jin's favourite Pandawan!" Bu Dong gleed as he proclaimed himself to be Jin's number one best cultivator/customer.

## Chapter 944 Volcanic Cavern - Part 1

"Ready?" Bu Dong asked as he cocked the bolt and clicked the safety to 'off'.

"Ready!" Heala smiled with a gentle expression on her face that even made Xia Mao's heart melt.

"Gosh these Panda NPCs, how can you not love them all?" Xia Mao wondered out loud as he stayed near the side of the wagon.

"They are both huggable and useful in battle. Boss Jin has truly created the perfect NPC ally." Jing Yu joked as she stood behind Heala, acting as backup support. With the gathered experience from previous cave fights, they were not taking any chances.

By now the monsters in the Volcanic Caverns were 'impatiently' waiting for the Pandarens' move, and they became active the moment they stepped into the cavern. Without much care for their own brethren, Sui Lions and Sui Dragons rushed through the cavern with the sole objective of being the first one to rip the invaders to shreds.

It was a scary sight no doubt... but only if one was utterly unprepared for it.

Fortunately, the group had figured out that something like this might happen. While sharing their comparing their experiences, both the Pandaren and Pandawan group had encountered one particular NPC in the village that reported seeing hundreds of Nian underling coming on to the shore.

However, no one had believed him because they knew that if the one could see the Nians, the monster would have gone and eaten him up.

Most people had treated him like a fool in the village, but Bu Dong had taken him at face value. Seeing as the Elder Pandarens had completed all but the flower side quest without encountering such a large size of Nian underlings, there was only one place left for them to be at... the Volcanic Caverns. Yet, this was just his intuition at play, and the Angry Ape Pandawan left it all to luck (or in this case, Jin's programmed dungeon instance.)

Worst case scenario, he could still use the weapon he was holding to fight against Nian. He had his doubts about how much damage it could do, but at the very least, it would be a unique and fun experience which was ultimately the most important thing in a dungeon instance.

As it appeared, his intuition had been spot on, and he faced it towards the Nian Horde and held down the trigger. The cold metal barrels started to roll, and the tubes of metal began to heat up. The gatling gun he had bought in the fiercest haggle against the weapon shophouse owner Bai Wan, was about to do the heavy lifting in this particular phase of the Volcanic Caverns.

"It seems Boss Jin probably used this with the intent to wear anyone down before they can fight the main Boss after this point?" Zi Dan shouted his question over the sound of the weapon, before he remembered that he could have just used the communication channel provided by the visors. (Especially since all of them were wearing earplugs on Bu Dong's recommendation.)

"Probably. Each of them has died with just a few bullets in their bodies. He must have toned them down compared to the ones we've been fighting, so they seem scary with their huge numbers but are still defeatable. Anyways, we need to keep moving or else the pile of bodies might block the wagon's path."



Xia Mao said as he kicked a dead Nian out of the way so the wagon could continue further down the cavern while Bu Dong continued gun blazing.

The spent bullet casings were flying after each shot burst out of the gun barrel and Zi Dan regretted that had not bought the ammo bag to store them in one place. Still, it was just a minor nuisance, and it was quite satisfying to watch the Nian underlings fall to the might of steel rain. Head Hunter Yiming could not believe his eyes as he helped pull the wagon. Even as he was raring to have a go against those Nian Underlings (or as programmed to do so), there was not a chance for him to even shoot an arrow out.

Eventually, the Nian Horde started to include bigger Sui Lions and Sui Dragons, yet the bullets were also sufficient to bring them to their knees as Bu Dong aimed the gatling gun onto their face. (He even shouted 'EAT LEAD' when doing so.)

However, the gatling gun had its limits, and since Bu Dong had set it at the highest rotation speed, the barrels had quickly heated up, forcing him to stop or risk that gun would jam.

The Nian Horde must have collectively breathed out a sigh of relief when that happened, giving them an opportunity to bring down these six trespassers. Still, the Elder Pandarens and Yiming had already prepared for that interval. They were each holding a firecracker with a small incendiary bomb attached to them. The moment they lighted the firecrackers up, the four of them threw them forward.

The bombs immediately went off, and the fire started spreading on the ground while the explosion of the firecrackers caused the Nian underlings to be stunned on the spot. This allowed the fire bombs to do their work and burn the Nian underlings to death.

As if that was not enough, Bu Dong had switched to his pistol and was holding it with two hands for better accuracy when he started to fire at the burning Sui monsters.

Heala actually moved back a little, pulling the wagon along with her so as to prevent the wagon accidentally catch on fire. Jing Yu acted accordingly and made sure there were no other Nian underlings that ambushed them from the back.

As soon as the gatling gun had cooled down, Bu Dong lowered the rotation speed and started firing haphazardly when the next wave of Nian underlings came at them. This process repeated a total of five times. Each time the gun was heated up, they would use whatever ranged projectiles or explosive materials so that there was always a gap between them. The audience thought it was a waste to use it on them since they could save it for the big cat boss. Yet, they seem to have forgotten sometimes being a big spender in Jin's dungeons does have its perks.

Once the coast was clear and no more reinforcements were coming in, Xia Mao and Zi Dan went around stabbing the Nian underlings to make sure they were all dead. Some had indeed pretended to stay dead, and those were the times where Zi Dan used his quick lightning reflexes to stop them. Meanwhile, Yiming and Jing Yu were busy moving the bodies out of the way to create a path for the wagon to move through.

Bu Dong had started to fill the wagon with firecrackers while gathering as many bullet cases as he could and placed them in wooden boxes which came with the firecrackers.

As they reached the end of the tunnel, the Pandawan pulled out a new box with ammunition only this time they were of the armour-piercing variety.

"Let's fight that Nian head-on and show Boss Jin that we can clear this particular dungeon." Bu Dong said, and all the members of his group nodded in agreement.

## **Chapter 945 Volcanic Cavern - Part 2**

The boss monster was sitting in the middle of a rather particular circle surrounded by hot burning lava. The Pandarens felt that the moment they stepped outside of the caves and into that stone circle, they would be trapped in a do or die battle. But for the time being the beast was licking her hind legs and even looked bored from waiting so long for for the Pandarens to appear.

They would have arrived sooner, but with the frightening amount of 'explosives' on the wagon, Heala and Yiming had taken it slowly, ensuring there were not many hiccups while pushing the wagon. Thankfully, Zi Dan and Xia Mao were always there to help support the wagon from the sides and assured them that as long as nobody played around with fire, they were perfectly safe.

"Guess, this is it. The point of no return." Zi Dan said as he wiped his sweat away. He felt the temperature of the cavern rising higher and the lava seeping around the circle was definitely not a good sign.

"You think we should have brought Tanke for this instead?" Xia Mao questioned if it was wise to rush in like that.

"Zi Dan did purchase some rather expensive inscription charms. Let's trust in the quality of Boss Jin's items." Bu Dong chuckled slowly and bitterly.

"Well, no use regretting anything now. Let's just go and hope for the best. Though, got to say, it was fun to see you use that gatling gun. I remembered you used for the Christmas Event too, right?" Jing Yu said as she walked towards the front of the wagon and held onto the Firecracker Spear. As long as the fuse was not lit, it acted as a normal spear and without any quick activation storage rings, it was best to carry it around. Meanwhile, Bu Dong did not say a word as it was precisely because of the Christmas event that he adored the gatling gun. That expensive piece of heavy equipment was not worth the price but the kick to kill those Nian Underlings was god damn satisfying.

"Alright, then. Let us succeed for the safety of the villagers of this island!" Head Hunter Yiming gave the wagon a good push from behind moving towards the edge of the stone circle, and the rest followed suit. Ironically, before he could follow behind the group, a magical barrier appeared barring him entrance.

"Guess this is as far as I could go!" Yi Ming said as he tried to force himself through the barrier once more but to no avail. "All the best then I will go back to the caverns to make sure that no Nian Underlings venture into this area!!" The Head Hunter encouraged them once more and disappeared from they come from.

"No wonder Chief Erming said this was her hunting ground. She could do whatever she likes, and it also looks like there's absolutely no way Nian is going to stop until all of us become her dinner. Too bad we're already down a man before the fight even started." Zi Dan sighed as he repeatedly banged on the wagon, signalling Bu Dong to fire off the opening volley.

"He might have been an extra helper against the Nian Horde only, or perhaps he was meant as a replacement if one of us got defeated before the final showdown. Whatever the case, let's just focus on the fight!" Bu Dong stated as he pressed on the trigger and the barrel started to spin.

The Nian was not so stupid to stay idle and hurled herself towards the wagon. Meeting her advance was Xia Mao who had already lit up a piece of firecracker which was tied to his dragon-slaying scimitar.

He dashed forward to intercept Nian so that he could buy Bu Dong some time for the gatling gun to warm up and shoot the lion abomination. It was a dangerous move since Xia Mao ran the risk of getting caught in the crossfire, but the Blind Cat Cultivator was willing to take the risk. He was confident that Bu Dong had the finesse to aim at the monster instead of him.

Thankfully, Bu Dong aimed at where Xia Mao would slam himself onto Nian and had overcompensated the gatling gun's aim so that when it released the rain of bullets, it would definitely shot the Monster Boss. (Nevertheless, there was some luck in play too, and he could only hope the best.

In addition, the firecracker on Xia Mao's scimitar was effective in startling the Nian, causing her to move to the side, giving the Blind Cat Cultivator some extra space from the hail of bullets.

Yet, the Nian was confident in her armoured scales, so she did not really care about the bullets and focused her attention back on the Blind Cat Cultivator who had startled her. However, she was wrong to face Xia Mao as the bullets aimed at her torso and began to tear through her armoured dragon-like scales.

The sudden unexpected pain caused her to fall back, and Bu Dong did not stop the gatling gun at her, keeping it in the same position as much as possible. Xia Mao also took the chance to slash at Nian's face as she tried to squirm herself away from the bullets. Her armoured scales were sturdy but face with continuous impact from pieces of fast penetrating metal, there was little she could do too.

"No use! No use! We've spent our time preparing, and we will be sure to defeat you as fast as possible!" Bu Dong shouted confidently as he continued to hold the gatling gun steady. They all could see Nian's hit points drop sharply on their visor closing in on the half way point.

There were only a few vital points on Nian that could give her a critical wound but instead of using finesse or the 'proper' way to handle the beast, the Pandawan had chosen to go with this brute force method. It continued to shatter the armoured scales and exposed much of Nian's flesh.

Bu Dong was over the moon with this change of development. After having spent over half of his current medal amount on this weapon and ammo needed to make it work, it was indeed an exclusive item to a select few. They wholeheartedly believed that if this method did not work, Boss Jin must have purposely created an unkillable event and in that case, Bu Dong would have every right to complain.

Unfortunately, the entire party knew that this method would not guarantee their victory, especially with the gatling gun overheating and the bullets being limited in number. Once they either ran out of

ammunition or when the gatling gun had to cool down, that was the Elder Pandarens' cue to start the battle proper.

The moment they heard the gatling gun sizzle from afar, indicating that it was about to overheat, Zi Dan and Jing Yu who had been preparing their chi went forth flanking the Nian, as Bu Dong pushed the weapon even further. He could see the barrels getting red orange hot, and smoke started to come out from the chambers of the gun barrels. What was worse was that he was standing on the wagon full of explosives and the situation he was in, clearly warrants immediate death.

Yet, he still kept his nerves steady by activating his chi. Because...How can you be scared if you are angry? And by being constantly angry with his Angry Ape cultivation style, his fear disappeared, and his nerves remained hard as steel.

However, they seemingly forgot that according to legends the Nian was not just a monster of strength but a monster of magic as well. The moment her hit points had been reduced to half, a wave of psychic energy burst out from her. That sudden aftershock caused the wagon to flip around, including everything they had packed within. (And Bu Dong on top)

"Do not worry!" Heala shouted as she banged her staff on the ground and immediately, an energy capsule enveloped the entire wagon with Bu Dong in it, and the items within it remained mostly intact with only a few firecrackers getting thrown outside.

On the other hand, Bu Dong felt the piping hot gatling gun on his torso as it was burning him. "HOT, HOT, HOT" He shouted, yet refused to let go of it. He even raised it upwards since he knew that that overheated piece of weaponry could potentially set off a chain reaction within the energy capsule if it touched the firecrackers and bombs he prepared.

(Fortunately, his heat resistance inscription charms were working and the energy barrier also seemed to numb the pain.)

"Great job Heala, without you we might have been blown to smithereens!" Bu Dong thanked their Panda Mercenaries as he watched the two Elder Pandarens attack the beast.

"A pleasure! Now hold still and let me tend to your wound. We will need you soon enough!" Heala ordered as she quickly went forth to make sure the other party members were also within her healing range.

### **Chapter 946 Volcanic Cavern - Part 3**

"We have exciting news, everyone! The first group has made it all the way through the Volcanic Caverns. Everyone should remember the group of seniors who smashed their boat into Nian earlier! They have just begun their fight against the Final Boss Nian and accompanying them is none other than our very own Pandawan Bu Dong!!!" Bear Cub One exclaimed.

After the introduction of Super NPC Captain Hei, nothing too interesting had happened in the Cinema Hall. Some of the featured live streams used creative, out of the box tricks, but it was nothing exciting

enough to get the blood of the spectators boiling. Just as many in the group of spectators were about to leave, the in house announcers pulled their attention back and played the highlights of Bu Dong and the Elder Pandarens fight against the Nian Horde.

The System even used the chance to advertise the fight by putting it onto the front page of Pandaflix. Any Pandarens who used the app or clicked on the promotional link on the forum was able to watch everything in real-time. It was the System's way to somewhat fix the 'problem' with their current streaming service.

The customers had put in complaints about Pandaflix being too cluttered due to an abundance of streams without any easy options to sort it by their own preferences. In fact, Jin had some ideas how to improve on it, like creating a section for award-winning streams of the Pandarens or Pandawans that cleared the dungeons with style or perhaps people that gave simple walkthrough guides on how to clear it.

But for now, everyone was more interested to see if Bu Dong would be able to pull the first dungeon clear with his new team composition. Jin's new improved system of clearing dungeons gave people an additional opportunity to earn a place in the Hall of Fame. (Which was now an official shophouse near the top of the mountains in the Panda Street Instance.) People could make it either by clearing it in one shot or by clearing it with multiple attempts like Bu Dong was doing right now.

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"Holy shit!? He brought a gatling gun into the battle?!" A middle-aged Pandaren who was walking around in Panda Street Instance cried out in amazement. He could hardly believe that something like that was so easily available for purchase.

"Don't get too overly excited. I just checked and while that gatling gun was on sale, don't forget that such a weapon eats through ammo! Not to mention even on sale it's freaking expensive, and such a weapon is difficult to set up in the middle of the battle. Unless one is very skilled in setting it up, it should be impossible for those Nian monster to not notice it." Another middle-aged Pandaren, who was also watching it on his phone, gave his opinion.

"That's just the start of the highlight, mister!" A relatively young Pandaren pointed at his cellphone screen and fast-forwarded to the appropriate time before showing it to the middle-aged Pandarens. "Here, you can clearly see that he set it up before going into the cavern and using that wagon to keep mobile."

"Holy Mother of- How is this not cheating?!" The middle-aged Pandaren asked as he shook his head in disbelief.

"Hahahah! I guess this is what you would call 'the power of medals'. If you use that new market to change your money to medals, you can gain enough spending power to even buy a gatling gun!" The first Pandaren theorised.

"I'm certain that he saved enough medals to buy that gun. No matter how you see it, this is the first time he is splurging this much!" The young Pandaren was obviously a fan of Bu Dong. He was quite apparently proud to be one of the few to know such details of the Pandwan from all the streams he had watched about the Angry Ape cultivator.

"Ah, sorry! Is my boy being erm...too enthusiastic?" The young Pandaren's father came to stop him from flaunting, but the middle-aged Pandarens were both shaking their heads.

"It's nice seeing someone this young be so interested in cultivation and dungeon instances. Before coming to this shop, I thought the old ways of dungeoneering were dead. Thanks to Boss Jin, I see it being revived and all I can say is this is indeed one of the better dungeon supplier shops out in Shenzhen at least." The middle-aged man smiled at the young boy.

"But you see those firecrackers on the wagon, he is basically courting death -oh my God! That Nian was vicious!" The father wanted to give his opinion of the highlight when they all watched the boss flip the wagon around.

Both middle-aged Pandarens smirked after discovering where the boy got his energy and enthusiasm from. Meanwhile, the teenager could only giggle and being giddy on Bu Dong's usage of the gatling gun. He even told them tidbits how the Angry Ape Pandawan had used them in the previous dungeon events too, and the boasting subsequently spurred the spectators to watch the current stream together despite them being total strangers.

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"You are not going anywhere you beast!" Zi Dan shouted as he took out his chain ball mace. He used his chi to extend the chains by executing the intermediate technique, Ball Chain Prison. The Bullet Cheetah Cultivator threw the mace over the Nian's legs trying to immobilise the beast. Once he managed to hook it, Zi Dan began sliding and circling around Nian's torso.

Nian realised what he was doing and tried to get out, but Xia Mao was holding it in place. He slashed his dragon-slaying scimitar right into the open wound that Bu Dong's rain of bullets had caused. Nian, in turn, yelled out in pain.

But it did not end there.

Jing Yu sent her blades to further aggravate the wound. This series of quick attacks gave Zi Dan sufficient time to bind its legs and forced Nian to drop on the ground. At the same time, she activated the firecracker halberd, and with each slash, the spear blade would explode upon contact.

However, the attacks might have been effective if it was at the start of their battle. Now, Nian had turned into an angry state from losing 50% of her hit points and had entered the second phase of the fight. Soon after Zi Dan had completed his chain binding technique, she roared out anger, causing molten lava to harden and become part of its defences. The firecracker halberd Jing Yu used was the only thing that was able to destroy those hardened floating lava shields.

But Nian was not completely happy that she was binded by Zi Dan, but she had not given up attacking them. Those Molten Lava Shields which had been broken down from the firecracker spear's explosion had a secondary effect, causing them to explode towards their enemies upon destruction, counteracting against Jing Yu's offensive streak. And that caused the hardened lava turned into projectiles, piercing straight to the Elder Pandarens.

If not for their fire resistance charms and cosmetically inscribed fire resistance armour, they might have been burned and suffered even more damage. Yet, Zi Dan finally thought that was his turn to shine by

spreading his chi into the atmosphere and started to heal the party members. They were surprised how fast and wide the healing chi could be distributed since most healing chi required closer contact, and they assumed it was partially due to his cultivation.

And only those with astute observation among the audience noticed that Nian, in turn, had also used the lava to heal herself. However, she used that opportunity to throw in another roar, and the Elder Pandarens expected another attack pattern to soon emerge.

The roar itself was not frightening, but the magically imbued Nian used it to further control the lava that surrounded them without the Elder Pandarens knowledge.

Only Heala had noticed that the temperature of the dungeon was rapidly rising and the lava was starting to churn like sea waves about to hit the harbour. She initially wanted to heal the rest, but with Zi Dan's emergency healing in play, her programming was able to allow her to be more aware of the surroundings. Thus, aiding her to sense the incoming danger to the entire party. She then quickly raised her staff and started to cast a spell to save her companions.

"Advanced Healing Arts! Wide Panda Barriers!" Heala exclaimed as she released magic into her staff. A horde of Panda silhouettes appeared and flew to the edge of the stone circle they were currently entrapped in. As the magical Lava Waves tried to come ashore, the Panda Silhouettes immediately form a barrier stopping it in its tracks.

There the Panda silhouettes began to slurp the lava as if they were drinking from a lake until the lava waves subsided. Upon fulfilling their command, the Elder Pandarens realised how devastating the lava overflow would have been if not for Heala. All of them were suddenly very happy about choosing her instead of Tanke. (Or perhaps, Tanke had a different way of saving them?)

#### **Chapter 947 Volcanic Cavern - Part 4**

"That was close! If not for those Panda silhouettes, we would have ended up as charcoaled Pandarens!" Bu Dong breathed out a sigh of relief. He thought he would be done for after his barrier suddenly disappeared in the midst of him sorting the explosives out.

However, this had heightened his concentration, allowing him to have a clearer picture of the overall fight. Nian was getting agitated, and she started to use her newfound powers more frequently and more destructively. There was not much time to be flustered by the lava attack.

The Elder Pandarens had been momentarily stunned by the dangerous use of lava magic by Nian, but thanks to Heala's interference, they made it out in one piece and decided to match a tit for tat. After charging their chi, the Pandarens continued to take turns to face Nian.

Yet, Nian had also similarly changed up her tactic. She no longer relied on using just her paws and jaws, but she focused on using the ample amount of lava around her. Bolts of molten lava shot out of the surrounding stream and headed towards Jing Yu.

"Watch out!" Zi Dan cried out as he ran to the Hungry Condor Cultivator and pulled her a step away, making her narrowly escape the bolts of lava at the last moment. It merely scrapped her clothes, and the fire-resistant inscription charm prevented any damage to her body. Still, they understood that luck could only last that long and the burning lava was starting to melt the stone floor, leaving a crevice in the middle of it all.

"Shit, I really wouldn't mind having Tanke to distract her!" Zi Dan grumbled as he used his chi once again to extend the chains on his mace ball and swung it towards Nian.

However, Nian pulled another fast trick on them, revealing a lava barrier that negated the mace ball. The attack bounced off its wall like a basketball. That was when it became clear to the Elder Pandarens that they had to utilise her weakness to get over her strengths in this second phase.

Since it was better to use the secret weapon the village gave to them on a later timing, all three Pandarens took out the firecracker that was hanging on their waist and lit them up. Xia Mao quickly threw his towards the barrier while Nian was not looking at him.

The lava barrier dissipated momentarily as the firecracker exploded, breaking Nian's concentration in conjuring it. That was also the cue for Jing Yu and Zi Dan to rush forward with their firecracker fused lit up. They wrapped the firecrackers unsafely on their weapons and used it as part of the attack, causing Nian to step backwards.

"Do not give her any time to stabilise herself!" Xia Mao ordered over the visors as he took out a firework starter from his storage ring and started to light it up. With the fuses lit, he also placed some of his chi into the projectiles so that they would travel further and hit the target faster.

"Firing the fireworks!" Xia Mao announced as he ran to the back of Nian and aimed behind her. The fireworks shot out of the starter, and once it impacted Nian's dragon scales, the fireworks changed into a rainbow colour, and the scales exploded. Everyone who was watching was stunned and subsequently realised that this must be the way to defeat Nian.

Xia Mao was also surprised by this discovery and quickly let out another shot to test the theory that was on his and everyone else's mind. By inserting another bout of chi into the firework starter, the subsequent fireworks flew, aiming for Nian's upper torso.

Meanwhile, Zi Dan turned his chain mace ball into a large metal ball and kept his attacks on the Nian to divert her attention. This allowed the firework bolt to collide with the Nian's dragon looking scales once more and true enough, the scales exploded in an instant with a loud bang and flashy colours.

"Looks like we found your weakness you little –" Zi Dan was swinging his enlarged mace ball onto the exposed region where Nian's scales were broken, but he was interrupted by a large giant paw emerging out of the pool.

It was made entirely out of lava, and Nian sent the paw flying towards the metal ball, slamming it hard to the other side of the cavern. With the initial magical barrier that Nian had erected to prevent the cultivators from running away still in place, Zi Dan was slammed into it and eventually fell straight down after impact.



"Zi Dan!!! Shit! He is dropping into the stream of lava!" Jing Yu watched the whole scene unfold, but she had her hands full evading Nian's aggressive style as it pounced straight towards her. The firecracker spear that she had was beginning to dissipate, but she still had her blades as her backup to defend herself when she was slammed into the ground because of Nian's pounce.

Yet, instead of a struggling expression, she yelled angrily at Nian and activated her chi which she stored for this moment. "Intermediate Sword Arts! Flying Condor Blade Barrage!" Jing Yu shouted, and her blades vibrated instantly, causing mirror images of her sword to emerge from the sword itself and soon, those chi blades started to pierce Nian at her underbelly.

She knew it would not do much damage compared to the firecracker spear that the Hungry Condor Cultivator was holding on, but she hoped it would force the great beast to move away. Sadly, her attack was rather underwhelming, and the Mother Lion continued to attempt to bite her head off despite her desperate struggles defending. If not for the spear, Jing Yu believed the Nian would have been more aggressive in her offence.

**\*SLAM!!!\***

Suddenly Nian disappeared from her line of sight as Jing Yu saw a large metal ball zooming past her face. "You might be some mythical lion! But I am a freaking Cheetah that matches the speed of a bullet!" Zi Dan shouted as he tried to catch his breath.

Jing Yu turned her head to see it was coming from, and she saw Xia Mao waving at her. "Can you believe him? Doesn't even mention that he needed a blind cat to save his ass from that fiery pit of hell!" Xia Mao pointed out as he thanked Heala for coming forth to heal them.

"Then I am not wasting the chance for that stupid lion to stand up!" Jing Yu said as she took her portion of firecrackers and placed it on the cloth wrapped blades. Lighting it up with her chi, she immediately sent her blades to pierce the Mother Lion. At the same time, Jing Yu attempted to stand up using the Firecracker spear as her support.

Nian conjured out whips of lava to prevent the blades from attacking her, especially since the cultivators knew her exact weakness. However, the monster had forgotten that they were fighting as a team and Zi Dan had already taken the spear from Jing Yu, dashing to strike Nian with a decisive stab.

The Mother Lion tried to counterattack with another loud deafening roar, but Xia Mao was pressuring her not to stay in one place with his firework starter shooting out fireworks at her direction. This bought time for Zi Dan to dash forth as he tried to stab her. But being the boss, Nian was not going to go down that easily.

However, the audience who had learned something new and Nian who was busy handling the Elder Trio seemingly forgot that the fight was merely a distraction. With another 10% of her health gone, Nian stopped paying attention to the real threat from the party.

Bu Dong.

## Chapter 948 Volcanic Cavern - Part 5

"I'm surprised the Elder Pandarens don't seem to be affected by the firecrackers. They didn't even flinch when those went off.." One of the spectators, a young teenager, wondered out loud.

"There are different types of firecrackers on sale in the village. The ones they used are smaller in size, and therefore there is also less of the explosive compound within them." A young woman in her twenties who had done the dungeon once offered her insight.

"Most importantly, they've come prepared and are using earplugs. Their communication so far seems to revolve around the visors' teamspeak option. Still, I gotta say they have guts to wield their firecrackers around like this. I would hesitate even if had the same fire-resistance inscription charms as them." A middle-aged man chimed in as well.

"I see! But if that's the case, why did the firecrackers not cause the dragon-like scales on Nian to break?" The teenager asked the two of them.

"I'm not too sure about that. Maybe only fireworks can make that happen?" The young woman seemed unsure.

"There's a difference between the firecrackers and the firework?" The middle-aged man was surprised about such a revelation.

"Fireworks contain some gunpowder, but they also have the components to let it spark flashes in a variety of colours. Firecrackers might be essentially the same thing, but they are primarily designed to cause a loud bang." The young woman explained.

"I think the Nian knows that those fire bolts can destroy her scales, making her vulnerable. That is why she tried to run away from it every time they get lit up. It could be the same for the fireworks too, just that Blind Cat Cultivator managed to aim with the use of his chi and scored a lucky direct hit." An astute observer next to them shared his theory.

Everyone who had fought the Nian would agree that her sturdy dragon scales was the only thing preventing the cultivators from doing massive damage to her. But now with the real weakness exposed, she could be defeated relatively easily.

The Pandarens in the Cinema Hall who knew about it realised that Jin had included the myth of Nian being afraid of firecrackers as part of his dungeon mechanism. All of them had been fooled into thinking that Nian was merely afraid of the loud sounds, but when in reality, it was the underlying mechanism that would allow them to break her high defence scales. All along, she was agile enough to prevent any direct contact with the firecrackers.

Similar to the Christmas Devil Event, the audience quickly spread the word on how to fight Nian in the spoiler portion of the forum. After which, the crowd went wild when they witnessed a scene where one of the firecrackers the party had used managed to touch Nian's scale. The Elder Pandarens were desperately trying to score a hit so they could prove that the firecrackers were equally effective. True enough, when it impacted, it immediately exploded with a different kind of loud bang and a portion of the scales disappeared. However, in terms of damage, Nian didn't even lose a single HP.

But it was not the Elder Pandarens who managed to score that firecracker hit. Only when the screen panned its camera to the side, did everyone see the culprit who threw the firecracker and it was none other than Bu Dong, the Angry Ape Pandawan. And right behind him was the bunch of explosives along with the firecrackers he was holding to.

"I heard you like these, you stupid beast! Here, I brought even more of them just for you!" Bu Dong taunted the Nian as he lifted them up. He had tied the explosives and firecrackers up with the most basic binding agents one could ever rely on.

Duct tape.

With lots of duct tape, he efficiently carried the mixed load of firecrackers and explosives with chi while bouncing it up and down. Nian saw the impending threat and summoned the entire stream of lava to surround the stone circle they were in. Without any further warning, the lava spread high and wide as if it was a tsunami wave waiting to be dropped into the circle and engulf the entire stone circle.

Despite being aware of the danger the Nian placed them in, the entire party were still going for the kill. Since the Nian had enclosed them in a kill box, there was nothing to do other than fight to the bitter end.

In such a high-stress situation, Bu Dong turned that fear into more anger as his chi enveloped the firecracker bombs. His fiery chi set the fuses alight, and he charged towards Nian as if he was carrying two large boulders on his shoulders.

The rest of the Pandarens also did their part with Zi Dan executing his Chain Ball Prison while Xia Mao kept control of Nian's movements with the adept use of his fireworks shooter.

At the same time, Jing Yu conjured up her chi once more, and her clothed blades pulled down Nian while reinforcing Zi Dan's Ball Chain Prison. The firecracker spear was wearing down from its prolonged use, and she too rather be using something she was proficient at.

Nian tried to get out of the imprisonment she was caught in, but after utilising her magic to call upon the tsunami wave of lava, her body had barely any energy left to resist, so she succumbed to the chains and blades. At that point, the waves were already crashing down, and Nian gambled on the lava destroying the explosives before it would reach her.

However, all of them had underestimated Bu Dong. The young Pandawan threw the ball of mixed firecracker bomb like some athlete during the Olympics. Once both explosive boulders were in midair, the firecrackers started to pop and exploded on impact with the Nian. The resulting explosion might even track on the Pepper's scale (although at only 1/10) and was enough to deflect the falling lava.

As valiant as his effort was, it couldn't help the team who was consumed by the incoming lava. Only instead of a black or 'Game Over', the spectators were greeted to the sight of five stone pillars emerging out of the pool of molten mess.

## **Chapter 949 Volcanic Cavern - Final**

There was a bright green barrier at the top of each of the stone pillars.

"HAHAHHA, we are still alive!" Zi Dan triumphantly shouted after confirming that he wasn't dreaming. There weren't even any burn marks on him, in fact, he actually felt so rejuvenated as if he was a whole decade younger.

Everyone else also felt the surge in power, and they all realised that only one person could be responsible for this— their beloved Panda Mercenary Heala.

The tsunami lava wave was Nian's way to try and turn the fight around if she ever found herself in a bad situation (or if her HP dropped to 10%). As long as they hired a NPC healer, the party had a good chance to survive this devastating effect.

However, it was not an automatic guarantee. Should their NPC healer get battered by the constant need to heal throughout the boss fight, or in the case, they had failed to protect her it could mean an instant party wipe. One also needed to account that this large barrier would leave Heala exhausted, so she might not have enough mana or emergency heals for the last part of the fight.

Of course the above only applied in a 'normal' dungeon run. Bu Dong's party had done anything but comply to the 'script' Jin had planned ever since the Volcanic Caverns, so everyone had been able to scrape through the fight without incurring too much damage. Not to mention, Heala had been able to conserve enough mana to concentrate for a large area of effect heal with a defensive barrier.

Then what about the parties who had gone in without Heala? Jin didn't want to force his recommendations on anyone, so instead, he had created a special side quest. It would only pop up for those groups who lacked any sort of healer, and after the Pandarens completed it would be able to utilise a one time use inscription just for this dungeon. (Something similar to the dark talisman that the Pandawans had used in the Great Wall of China Dungeon Instance.)

In those cases that the groups had one dedicated healer which was not the Panda Mercenary, the healers' visor would show them that there was already a formation on the bottom of the hunting grounds which would help them defend against the tsunami. That, however, would definitely cripple and exhaust their healer for the rest of the fight, which would lead to its own problems.

No matter what, Jin had set it up in a way that the parties would continue to the final stage where they would fight an enraged and cornered Nian. Alas, Bu Dong had 'gifted' two large boulders of explosives that had taken care of the existence of the Mother Nian before she ever had the chance to enter that phase. And thus, they miraculously completed the dungeon instance, making them the first party in the entire shop to do so.

"Gosh, it's been a long time since I heard that announcement. Gee, Boss Jin. Why are your dungeons getting harder!" Bu Dong complained as he sat down on the ground and heaved out loudly.

"So this is how it feels to get a first clear for a dungeon, eh? I have to say, I don't feel very accomplished...more like just relieved it's over." Xia Mao sighed through the teamspeak channel.

"Hahah, don't worry that feeling will come soon enough after you watch your own dungeon replay. Nothing beats seeing yourself pulling off a dangerous move, barely escaping in the face of certain doom

and the realisation that you were to one who achieved that." Bu Dong shared his thoughts based on his personal experience.

"So doesn't that mean we will become Pandawans now?" Zi Dan asked casually.

"Heh! Do you really care about that? If so, you would be the first Pandawan who retired as soon as he gets the title." Xia Mao teased his friend while the lava beneath subsided.

"You never know! I might come back just to play with you guys!" Zi Dan smiled as he had made a lasting memory none of them would ever forget. "We need to celebrate our titles tonight. Allow me to treat you guys to some good quality steamboat!"

"You sure your son won't mind us?" Jing Yu questioned.

"Bah, I dare him to have the gall to complain about me enjoying my last days here, when he's the one who practically forced me to follow him! And don't worry about expenses! I will pay for everything!"

"Great, I have the bill for the gatling gun and its ammunition and the other stuff in my storage ring." Bu Dong exclaimed, and that was enough to keep Zi Dan mouth shut for a moment.

"I'm kidding, kidding! Those are my own expenses that I've already accounted for before I bought them." Bu Dong teased Zi Dan as he did some stretches.

"Then erm what are we waiting for? Do we have to go back to the village to report or something?" Xia Mao yawned as he felt that he had enough excitement for one day.

"The Nian must have been here a long while. Surely she must have hoarded some types of treasures. Let's wait for the lava to subside, then we might be able to retrieve whatever is still here." Heala suddenly commented, and the rest took it as a reminder that they still had to pick up their reward chest.

And true enough, once the lava dissipated, there was a large blackened chest on the bottom just waiting to be looted. The entire party went down to check it out and saw there were five palm imprints (one of which was obviously that of a panda) on the giant chest. They did not hesitate to put their hands on it, and they heard a click sound.

Medal coins burst out from the chest like an erupting geyser and threatened to bury them underneath. Even new equipment could be found hidden in the sea of coins within the chest.

It was the first time the Pandarens were showered with this much reward and partially understood why Bu Dong loved to get the first dungeon clear. It was not just the fame or title but also the satisfaction of being (so heavily) rewarded after a difficult battle.

And upon closer inspection of the equipment, they noticed that it was actually exclusive Nian Costumes and accessories. A full set for each and everyone (including Heala as her alternate skin)! Not only that, there was a mini Nian plushie with various poses for all four of them. Bu Dong had never seen any Nian plushies available for sale indicating it was limited stock. (He was looking forward to rubbing that in Xiong Da's face)

"This is honestly my first plushie...and now I get why people are so crazy about them. The feeling... it's just inexplicably good." Jing Yu said as she unconsciously hugged it tightly.

"Don't get too used to it, or you might develop a craving for more. I don't even know when it started, but I suddenly found myself a proponent of getting all of these plushies. People thought I was weird at first, but if you collect enough of them, you will discover that there are some subtle differences between each and every one of these plushies."

"The way you make it sound, it does indeed sound crazy weird. Hahahah!" Xia Mao laughed as the group slowly gathered their loot and exited the dungeon instance to enjoy their rest in the Luxury Recovery Instance.

## **Chapter 950 New Pandawans**

Under normal circumstances, Jin would have personally come out to congratulate anyone who achieved a first clear. However, his minion hotpot jumbling has led to a rather... predictable outcome.

As a cultivator who had reached a high cultivation level, he was able to dispel any alcohol with ease given time. Yet each group had greeted him with different types of quality alcohol, and they had all been extremely generous when it came to filling his cup. The dungeon supplier didn't want to seem ungrateful, so he accepted every shot as a sign of respect for his minions until he became too inebriated to use that technique and eventually passed out.

To make up for his lack of presence, the System awarded the newly promoted Pandawans with more medals than it would have otherwise done. It also created a post titled "Congratulations to the new Pandawans!" under Jin's name, which instantly got upvoted by all his customers. (It also included a link for their adventure on Pandaflix)

As part of their promotion, the three new Pandarens naturally got invited to join the exclusive Pandwan group chat. Bu Dong instantly introduced them and heavily complimented their efforts in the Nian Dungeon Instance.

"He gives us too much credit. If not for his planning and guts in battle, we might not have beat Nian, let alone achieved a first clear." Jing Yu stated humbly, but Xia Mao was already sending friendly emojis replying to Bu Dong's messages.

However, there was little activity within the Pandawan group at this late hour(or early wee hours in the morning). The only exceptions were Yue Han and Yue Wen who had returned home and were now preparing for a trip up north to visit their grandparents.

They were (mildly) shocked that Bu Dong was able to complete the dungeon this quickly after their earlier failure, but listening to Bu Dong's highly unorthodox plan, it made sense how they succeeded. Yue Han and his sister congratulated the new Pandawans and wondered if more would follow.

"With Boss Jin adding an extra first clear for this instance, he might indeed plan to increase the number of us. Assuming we stop taking all the first clears that is. I look forward to it. About time for some new blood to come on. Welcome to the group chat!" Xiong Da greeted them later in the morning, and the newly ascended Pandawans were quite honoured to meet the legendary Pandawan, which Boss Jin promotes all the time.

"Why do you all behave like he is some sort of superstar? I'm actually as good as him, if not better!" Bu Dong complained while eating with the group in the Restaurant Train Instance.

Since Zi Dan was about to leave in a couple of days, he didn't see the need to hold on to his Panda Medals and had invited all of them to this feast. (They were all eventually too embarrassed to accept the invitation for the steamboat dinner and so Zi Dan decided to do this since it was the company that matters.)

"You sure you don't wish to come for a few more games before you leave?" Xia Mao asked.

"Well, this is the new year. I planned to visit some old friends before I move and one should leave on a high note, right? I doubt we'll be able to one-up such a victorious dungeon run." Zi Dan reasoned which Xia Mao could not deny.

"Heh, then I guess this will be our last meeting then. A shame, I won't be able to make it for tonight." Jing Yu sighed since she had agreed to attend a family reunion dinner with her relatives.

"It will be awkward that I go to your house alone. As you said, after such a win, and with the yummy food, this is a great way to say goodbye." Xia Mao said as he shook his friend's hand, thanking him for the dungeon runs and his friendship.

"You never know, perhaps when Boss Jin dominates the world with his dungeon instances, you guys will just be able to meet again in a shop instance." Bu Dong remarked casually, and the elders laughed.

"Sure, as long as it's Boss Jin's dungeon, I will gladly come and play." Zi Dan replied with a chuckle. "He just needs to implement something like that before I bite the dust. With me having to look out for my grandkid who knows how long that is! Hahaha."

"Then you better tell Boss Jin, that he has to hurry. There's a personal message where we can give him feedback, mostly about how we liked his dungeons, but we are also free to put in suggestions and such." Bu Dong replied.

"Oh really?" Zi Dan asked with a light tone. "Hard to believe that something like an overseas dungeon instance connection or that sort of thing is possible."

"True, it's not possible... yet. But I have a feeling Boss Jin could find a way to make it feasible. Judging by his actions, he must have plans for expansion as well. In any case, he can't exactly ignore the wishes of his veteran Pandawans no matter how far fetched it is. Although he will surely say that we are crazy or something! Hahah!" Bu Dong said in return.

"Sure sounds far fetched. Still, it's a nice thought that someone could connect the world through dungeon instances!" Xia Mao envisioned how connected the world would be.

"Anyways, thank you for the wonderful meal. I shall be going off first." Bu Dong excused himself as he felt the elders might have some more things to say to each other.

He finally had the time to explore the Panda Street Instance, and he already had a few agendas in his head such as checking out the hidden Mecha store that the sub forums of the Supa Robot Wars were talking about.

If he could not find it, there was always the Bamboozled Bar Instance which people were raving on. And last but not least, he needed to redecorate his hideout with his new Nian event medal.

Overall, he and the Elder Pandawans literally had a blast of a time with this new format of dungeon instance.